DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 437 489 UD 033 293

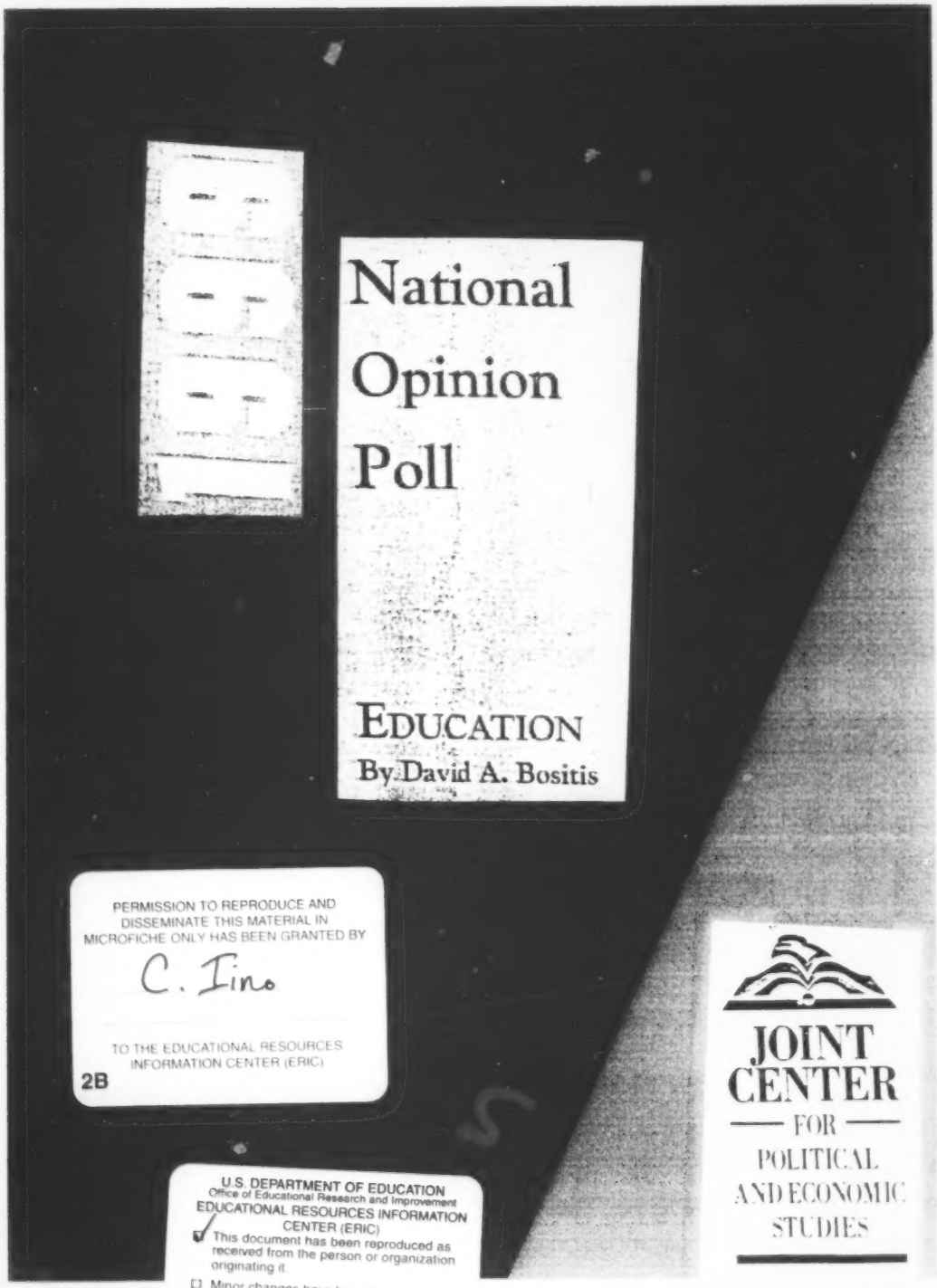
AUTHOR Bositis, David A.
TITLE National Opinion Poll--Education, 1999.
INSTITUTION Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY Smith Richardson Foundation, Inc., Greensboro, NC.
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 20p.; For the 1997 poll report on politics, see ED 418 187.
AVAILABLE FROM Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 1090 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005-4928. For full text: <http://www.jointcenter.org>.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Academic Standards; Adults; *Blacks; Educational Finance; *Elementary Secondary Education; *Public Opinion; *School Safety; Surveys; Test Use; Whites
IDENTIFIERS African Americans

ABSTRACT

This report is the fourth in a series that tracks the attitudes of African Americans and the general public in the area of education. The 1999 poll was a survey of 1,678 adults, conducted in May 1999. The survey's questions cover a broad range of topics, including politics, education, crime and criminal justice policy, the 2000 Census, immigration, and race relations. The survey has two components: a national general population sample of 850 adults and a national sample of 900 adult African Americans. Seventy-two African Americans who responded were in both samples. Whites' views on education had changed little since the 1998 poll, but African Americans' views on education were generally less optimistic than those expressed in the 1998 survey. There was solid black support for statewide standards and tests, although a significant minority of African Americans believe that such standards and tests are unfair to minority group members. In the 1999 survey, as in previous years, there is strong support among African Americans for increased government spending on education. A positive note was sounded in that significantly fewer (20%) African Americans reported violent incidents at the schools near where they live. A "note" explains survey methodology. (Contains 6 data tables.) (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 437 489



PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN
MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. Iino
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
2B

JOINT CENTER
— FOR —
POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC
STUDIES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

UD033293

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies informs and illuminates the nation's major public policy debates through research, analysis, and information dissemination in order to: Improve the socioeconomic status of black Americans; Expand their effective participation in the political and public policy arenas; and Promote communications and relationships across racial and ethnic lines to strengthen the nation's pluralistic society.

Opinions expressed in Joint Center publications are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff, officers, or governors of the Joint Center or of the organizations supporting the Center and its research.

The Joint Center gratefully acknowledges the support of the Smith-Richardson Foundation in making the 1999 National Opinion Poll and this publication possible.

Copyright 1999 by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
1090 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005-4928
www.jointcenter.org.

1999 National Opinion Poll

EDUCATION

By David A. Bositis

INTRODUCTION

During 1998 and 1999, in most major U.S. public opinion polls, education has been identified as the most important problem facing elected officials and policymakers. The two major elements of education as an issue are the quality of education (challenges of the new global economy, testing, computers, social promotion, school vouchers, and reading and math scores) and, especially after the killings at Columbine High School this spring, school safety. Within this overall focus has been a particular concern about failing inner city schools and the quality of education received by African American and other minority students.

The 1999 Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies National Opinion Poll is a national survey of 1,678 adults, conducted between May 5 and May 29, 1999. The survey's questions cover a broad range of topics including politics, education, crime and criminal justice policy, the 2000 Census, immigration, and race relations.

The survey has two components: a national general population sample of 850 adults and a national sample of 900 adult African Americans. There are 72 African American respondents in the general population sample who are also part of the national sample of African Americans.

Thus, in total, there are 1,678 adults, 18 years of age or older, who are included in this study. This release of findings is on education issues. The first two releases from the survey covered politics and the 2000 Census. In the following months, the Joint Center will release findings on the other areas identified above. The survey methodology is described in an accompanying appendix.

For the past four years, The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies National Opinion Poll has tracked the attitudes of African Americans and the general public in the area of education[1]. This report is the fourth in that series. Like the earlier reports, it looks at issues of school quality, school safety, support for spending on education, and school vouchers.

While both black and white Americans rank education as the most important national problem, their views on education issues may differ considerably. Age, income, and ideology also influence individual views on education. That is, there are differences in views between older and younger adults, between poorer and wealthier persons, and between liberals and conservatives.

In the Joint Center's 1999 National Opinion Poll, while whites' views on education changed little, African Americans' views on education issues were generally less optimistic than those expressed in the 1998 survey. There are several possible explanations for this shift. First, African Americans were unusually optimistic in the 1998 poll, when for the first time, more blacks than whites indicated that they were financially better off than a year earlier. A generalized optimism or pessimism, usually associated with personal financial well-being, can frequently influence a person's opinions on other unrelated issues. Second, the national debate on school vouchers

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

focuses especially on minority students and emphasizes the poor performance and quality of many of the schools they attend. Further, many states with new statewide testing systems have reported large numbers of failing schools, especially schools with large minority enrollments. Finally, there is considerable volatility in the public's opinions on certain education issues, partially due to the fact that many people do not possess solid first-hand knowledge of what is going on in the schools[2]. Hence, media coverage of certain issues and events can cause significant shifts in public opinion.

On balance, black respondents in 1999 rated their local public schools more negatively than a year earlier, and a larger percentage of them believe their local public schools are getting worse. These views may be a reason that black support for school vouchers increased significantly from last year, with three in five blacks supporting school vouchers. In addition, there is solid black support for statewide standards and tests, although a significant minority of African Americans believe such standards and tests are unfair to minority group members. In the 1999 survey, as in the previous year's survey, there is very strong support among black Americans for increased government spending on education. Finally, and on a positive note, in the 1999 survey, significantly fewer (20 percent) African Americans reported violent incidents at schools near where they live than in the Joint Center's 1996 survey.

In the 1999 survey, whites reported fairly high levels of satisfaction with their local public schools, and they are more likely to think the schools are improving than regressing. Like African Americans, whites also support increased school spending, reported fewer violent incidents at their local schools, and increasingly support school vouchers. Finally, whites overwhelmingly support statewide standards and tests, and proportionally few of them express concern about the possible unfairness associated with those standards and tests.

1996-1999: AREAS OF CONTINUITY

While the Joint Center's 1999 National Opinion Poll shows African Americans having more negative views of their local public schools than in 1998 and reveals increasing support for school vouchers, it also shows several areas where there is significant continuity over the 1996-1998 time period. There continues to be significant public support for increased school funding from both blacks and whites. Support for school vouchers has fluctuated over the past four years, but African Americans have consistently been more supportive than whites. Also, while there has been a certain volatility in African Americans' ratings of the local public schools, over this time period a significantly smaller proportion of blacks than whites rated their local schools as excellent or good; except for 1998, this gap between black and white ratings has been approximately 20 percentage points.

Other previously seen patterns and trends revisited in 1999 were especially related to generational differences; for example, persons under 50 years of age, black and white, were more concerned with education than those older than 50. Also apparent in the 1999 survey is the emergence of the "morals vs. money" divergence in education, with some conservatives showing significantly less support for spending more money on education than either political liberals or moderates.

THE WASHINGTON DEBATE ON EDUCATION

The partisan debate in Washington on education has several facets. Both Republicans and Democrats are supporting higher education spending; however, budget constraints have made the increases quite modest. In addition, the federal government contributes less than 10 percent of the funding of K-12 local public

schools. Republicans have been advocating a bloc grant approach, with local leadership having wide latitude in spending any new money from Washington. The Republican leadership in Washington has been consistently opposed to any national standards. Congressional Democrats and the Clinton administration prefer targeting any increased K-12 education spending to hiring new teachers and funding after-school programs.

Among the presidential candidates, most Republicans—including Texas Governor George W. Bush—are advocating increased use of school vouchers. The two Democratic candidates are opposed to vouchers.

There is a cadre of mostly Republican conservatives in Washington who believe that many of the problems in the public schools are attributable to moral decline. Senate Republicans have authorized a new task force (proposed by Sen. Brownback of Kansas) to investigate the effects of Hollywood productions (both TV and movies) on American culture, and especially on young people. Republicans associated with this group have regularly introduced legislation allowing prayer in school, encouraging the expulsion of unruly students, and encouraging other measures to enforce discipline in the classroom. Their counterparts in several, mostly southern, states have urged the "return" of the Ten Commandments to the classroom.

Finally, on school violence, the Republican leadership in Washington has been supporting tougher crime legislation with a particular emphasis on increasing sentences for juvenile offenders. The Democrats' position on school violence is toughening gun control laws, including mandating trigger locks for all firearms.

RATING PUBLIC SCHOOLS Table 1

In the Joint Center's National Opinion Poll, the gap between black and white satisfaction with local public schools had narrowed between 1997 and 1998, but it widened again between 1998 and 1999. A solid majority of whites (59.7 percent) rated their local public schools as excellent or good in 1999, while only 39.7 percent of blacks did so (see below). This 20 percentage point gap is almost twice as large as the 11.6 percentage point gap between blacks and whites observed in the 1998 survey. As there was little

	Black Population			General Population		
	Excellent/Good %	Fair %	Poor %	Excellent/Good %	Fair %	Poor %
1996	41.0	37.0	16.5	63.7	22.7	7.4
1997	34.3	37.7	23.3	56.9	26.2	13.3
1998	45.8	30.4	16.8	54.4	25.3	16.1
1999	39.7	35.2	22.9	59.0	26.5	11.2

difference in whites' favorable school ratings between 1998 and 1999, most of the evaluation gap increase was due to fewer blacks giving excellent or good ratings to their schools. This decline returns the black-white satisfaction gap to where it was prior to 1998—approximately 20 percentage points. As discussed

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

above, the unusually high level of financial optimism seen in the 1998 survey may have influenced the ratings of local public schools.

There has also been a corresponding increase in the proportion of blacks rating their local public schools as poor, from 16.8 percent to 22.9 percent. Only 10.7 percent of whites rated their local public schools as poor.

There were several subgroup differences among blacks in rating their local public schools. Respondents from the Northeast (66 percent fair or poor) and the Midwest (68 percent fair or poor) were likely to rate their local public schools more negatively than those from the South (56 percent fair or poor) or West (33 percent fair or poor). Young black adults (65 percent fair or poor), black liberals (61 percent fair or poor), and Christian conservatives (64 percent fair or poor) were more negative in their judgements than older blacks or moderates (53 percent fair or poor) and secular conservatives (51 percent fair or poor). African Americans from households with the highest income (more than $90,000) gave the best overall rating to their local public schools, with a majority (52 percent) rating their local schools as excellent or good and only 44 percent rating them fair or poor. Two other black subgroups with comparatively positive views of their local public schools were those without a high school diploma and those from households making less than $15,000 per year; their responses were evenly divided between excellent/good and fair/poor. African Americans in the middle-income ranges gave more negative evaluations of their local public schools, with persons from upper-middle-income households ($60-$90,000) being the most negative (67 percent fair or poor).

Among the subgroups of the general population, persons older than 50 years (63-64 percent excellent or good), and those from households with incomes of $60,000 or more (64-66 percent excellent or good) rated their local public schools very favorably. In direct contrast to the black population, those in the general population (mostly whites) from the Northeast (63 percent excellent or good) and the Midwest (66 percent excellent or good) rated their local public schools more favorably than those from the South (53 percent excellent or good) or the West (57 percent excellent or good). Those from lower income households (less than $35,000) were less positive in their ratings of local public schools (50-52 percent excellent or good) than those from middle (56 percent excellent or good) and upper-middle (66 percent excellent or good) income households.

SCHOOL PROGRESS Table 2

To further examine how people feel about their local schools, respondents were asked whether over the past five years, schools have gotten better or worse. Roughly similar proportions of blacks and whites believe that schools in their community have gotten better or stayed the same; however, a significantly higher proportion of blacks answered that the schools in their community have gotten worse. In the 1999 survey, 28 percent of blacks and 27 percent of whites thought their local schools were better than five years previously; 33 percent of blacks and 40 percent of whites thought their local schools were unchanged over that time period; and 34 percent of blacks and 24 percent of whites thought their local schools had gotten worse. For whites, the responses to this question were unchanged from those from the 1998 survey. For blacks, the proportion of respondents saying that local schools had gotten worse increased by 23 percent.

In the black population, there were age differences, with those under 50 years (37-39 percent) more likely to think their local schools were getting worse than those over 50 years (27 percent). College-educated African Americans (42 percent worse) and those from upper-middle-income households (45 percent worse) were the subgroups most likely to think their local schools were getting worse. Black secular

conservatives were the subgroup most likely to believe their local public schools were getting better (38 percent). There were no particularly interesting subgroup differences in the general population.

SCHOOL VIOLENCE Table 3.

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of any incidents of school violence near where they lived. Given the events at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, school violence was a problem that a great many people had been thinking about. However, despite Columbine, the proportion of people reporting violence at a school near where they lived in the 1999 survey was down substantially from the 1996 survey when this question was last asked; this decline in reporting violent incidents corresponds to an actual decline (as reported in government statistics) in incidents of school violence over the 1996 to 1999 time period.

Among African Americans, 31 percent said they were aware of a violent incident at a school near where they lived; this represents a 20 percent decline from the 1996 survey when 39 percent reported such incidents. Among whites, 27 percent reported knowledge of a violent incident, which represents a 17 percent decline from 1996.

Among the subgroups of the black population, those between 18 and 25 years of age (51 percent), and persons from upper-middle-income households (43 percent) were the most likely to report a violent incident at a nearby school; these two subgroups were also more likely than others to report such incidents in the 1996 survey. Black seniors (24 percent) and persons from lower-middle-income households (24 percent) were the least likely to report violent incidents at nearby schools.

Among the subgroups of the general population, those between 18 and 25 years old (43 percent), and those without a high school diploma (36 percent) were the most likely to report a violent incident at a school near where they lived.

SCHOOL SPENDING Table 4

The school spending debate in Washington and elsewhere is not surprising since large majorities of both black and white Americans think too little is being spent on education. In the black population, 82 percent of respondents believe the government is spending too little on education, while 68 percent of whites think likewise; for blacks, this represents a 7 percent increase (in the proportion of those thinking too little is being spent) since last year's survey, and for whites it represents a 14 percent increase.

In the black population, large majorities of all subgroups think too little is being spent on education; black seniors (71 percent too little) and those without a high school education (69 percent too little) were the subgroups that were (comparatively) less likely to think too little was being spent on education.

Despite the strong support for increased school spending in the general population, the nature of the debate in Congress on education generally, and about Littleton in particular, is manifest in the survey findings. In the recent congressional debate, there have been conservative members of Congress—especially those associated with conservative Christian groups—who have argued that money is not the most important issue in education, but rather the schools' failure to inculcate moral values. Many of these members of Congress think more than enough money is being spent on education. These two sides of the debate are seen in the general population, where liberals (85 percent) strongly support increased education

spending, and (predominantly white) conservatives—both secular and Christian–are least supportive; although a majority (54 percent) does support increased education spending.

Besides the "money vs. morality" differences in the general population, there were also (long-term) differences between those under 35 years (79-84 percent favor increased spending on education) and senior citizens (54 percent favor increased spending).

SCHOOL VOUCHERS Table 5

Among African Americans, support for school vouchers in the 1999 survey shows a 25 percent increase in support from last year; white support for school vouchers increased by a similar margin (27 percent increase) and for the first time since this question was first asked in the Joint Center's 1996 National Opinion Poll, a majority of whites indicated support for school vouchers. A substantial majority of the black respondents (60 percent) supported school vouchers, while only one-third of the black respondents rejected them; 52 percent of whites favored vouchers and 41 percent opposed them (see below). In the 1998 survey, there had been a 16 percent decline from the year earlier in support for vouchers as well as a similar decline among whites.

	Black Population		General Population	
	Support Vouchers %	Oppose Vouchers %	Support Vouchers %	Oppose Vouchers %
1996	48	44	43	50
1997	57	38	48	46
1998	48	40	42	50
1999	60	33	53	40

It remains somewhat unclear where school vouchers fit in the overall issue of K-12 education. Most school voucher proposals have been limited in nature, often targeted only at students from the worst schools and at minority students. Many opponents of school vouchers believe vouchers take money away from the public schools and violate the separation of church and state. Further, they believe that the targeting of minority students in poor schools by school voucher advocates represents a first step in a long-term strategy to make school vouchers more generally available.

It is clear in evaluating the results from Joint Center surveys between 1996 and 1999 that both black and white views on the school voucher issue are somewhat volatile, although blacks have generally favored school vouchers more than whites. This volatility is not surprising because public knowledge of school vouchers is low.[3] Nevertheless, vouchers appear to have two main attractions: for some people, vouchers represent an alternative to a status quo (e.g., poor schools) they dislike; other people are attracted to vouchers because of the "choice" vouchers offer.[4]

In both the 1998 and 1999 Joint Center surveys, there was an interesting relationship between evaluations of local public schools and support for vouchers; however, the nature of the relationship was different for blacks and whites. In the 1998 survey, blacks' ratings of their local public schools improved significantly

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

from the previous year with 34 percent more excellent and good ratings (from 34 to 46 percent excellent or good), while support for school vouchers declined 16 percent. Between 1998 and 1999, the proportion of blacks rating their local public schools as excellent or good declined 16 percent, and the proportion supporting school vouchers increased 25 percent (from 48 to 60 percent). In contrast, between 1997 and 1998, the proportion of whites rating their local public schools as excellent or good declined five percent, and support for school vouchers declined 13 percent. Between 1998 and 1999, the proportion of whites rating their local public schools as excellent or good increased five percent, and the proportion of whites supporting school vouchers increased 27 percent. In sum, the relationship between the two questions is a positive one for whites, and an inverse one for blacks.

The clear generational differences on support for school vouchers that emerged in the Joint Center's 1997 survey were more muted in the 1998 survey, but reemerged in this year's survey. Among blacks, two-thirds of baby boomers and more than 70 percent of those younger than 35 years supported school vouchers, while a small plurality (49 to 44 percent) of those between 51 and 64 years supported vouchers, and a plurality (49 to 42 percent) of black seniors opposed them. Black Christian conservatives (68 percent in favor), persons from the lowest-income households (72 percent) and the highest-income households (71 percent), and persons from households with children (71 percent) were the black subgroups that were most favorable to vouchers. As noted above, blacks over 50 years were the most opposed to vouchers.

Similarly, solid majorities of those under 50 in the general populace supported vouchers, while a plurality of those between 51 and 60 years (47 to 46 percent) and a majority of seniors (51 to 38 percent) opposed school vouchers. Conservatives (59-60 percent), persons without a high school degree (73 percent), persons from the lowest-income households (59 percent), and persons from households with children (63 percent) were the subgroups of the general population most supportive of vouchers—and as with the black population, seniors were most opposed.

STATEWIDE STANDARDS AND TESTS Table 6

Respondents were queried on their views on statewide standards and tests as to whether they were mostly good, i.e., they ensure competitive skills needed for college or the workplace, or problematic, i.e., they are discriminatory to minority students and represent a barrier to attaining high school diplomas. While blacks were more guarded in their support for statewide standards than whites, a solid majority of black respondents favored statewide standards and tests (55 vs. 37 percent); whites overwhelmingly favored statewide standards (71 vs. 17 percent).

Among the subgroups of the black population, those from the Northeast (65 vs. 29 percent), those with at least a college degree are (60 vs. 33 percent), and those from upper-middle income (68 vs. 27 percent) and upper-income (76 vs. 22 percent) households are more supportive of statewide standards. African Americans without a high school diploma represent the black subgroup most opposed to statewide standards and tests, with a plurality (47 vs. 44 percent) believing that such standards and tests are unfair. Also, young black adults (52 to 46 percent) are fairly evenly divided between those who think the tests and standards beneficial and those who think them unfair.

Among the general population, a substantial majority of every subgroup support statewide standards and tests. Those subgroups of the general population with the largest proportion of respondents who believe statewide standards and tests are unfair include persons between 18 and 25 years (30 percent think the standards and tests unfair), liberals (30 percent), and those without a high school diploma (32 percent).

NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

The survey was designed and the questionnaire developed at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. The overall study design consisted of two sample groups: a national general population sample of 850 people and a national sample of 900 African Americans. There are 72 African American respondents in the general population sample who are also part of the national sample of African Americans. Thus, in total, there are 1,678 adults, 18 years of age or older, who are included in this study.

The survey results are based upon (random digit dialing) telephone interviews with 1,678 adults that were conducted between May 3, 1999, and May 28, 1999. The field work was done by Research America of Philadelphia. Randomized procedures were used to select respondents within each household reached by telephone, and after the initial call there were at least three call-backs if no interview was completed.

The results of this survey for both the general population sample and the black population sample should be interpreted with a statistical margin of error of plus-or-minus 3.5 percentage points. Actually, this survey like all surveys, does not have a margin of error. The individual items in the survey have margins of error; the margin of error for a question is based upon its sample variance, the level of confidence desired (e.g., 95 percent), and upon sample size.[5] The 3.5 percentage points are a conservative estimate of margin of error; many items, especially those where large majorities of either sample hold similar positions, have a margin of error much smaller than 3.5 percentage points.

In addition to the random error component in surveys, there are potentially non-random errors that may be present. While this survey is based upon random digit dialing techniques that effectively deal with potential problems in telephone surveys such as unlisted numbers and new numbers, non-response in telephone surveys produces a variety of known (and probably some unknown) biases. Further, a telephone survey by definition defines its population as those individuals with some reasonable expectation of being reached by telephone. Such a definition, of course, eliminates certain populations; for example, most homeless people, and others living in poverty, who are unreachable by phone are not part of the sample population. Thus, the statements made based upon this survey are most likely not generalizable to homeless people, black or white.

During the field work phase of the survey, an effort was made to maximize the use of same-race interviewers, and a majority of the interviews were conducted with same-race interviewers (black interviewers for black respondents and white interviewers for white respondents).

The sample data from the overall survey are weighted in the analyses to population parameters for a variety of demographic factors.[6] The parameters used in this weighting are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 1996 Current Population Survey and prior Joint Center surveys.

NOTES

1. See these three Joint Center reports: *1996 National Opinion Poll: Social Policy; 1997 National Opinion Poll: Children's Issues;* and *1998 National Opinion Poll: Education.*

2. For example, the Joint Center's 1999 National Opinion Poll was fielded shortly after the killings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. The images of deaths and violence in a well-to-do suburban high school that were featured so prominently in the news caused many Americans to think that schools were unsafe places. In reality, deaths and violence in schools had been declining over this time period (1996-1999), in other words, schools were safer. Nonetheless, most of the schools in the country had instituted tough new safety measures by the start of the new school year.

3. In the 1998 Joint Center National Opinion Poll, respondents were asked several questions on school vouchers and the responses indicated a low level of knowledge and little familiarity with them.

4. There is one group of people who do have first-hand knowledge of the array of issues surrounding school vouchers, namely people with children in private or parochial schools. For them, school vouchers would represent a very significant and tangible financial benefit.

5. A random sample is a random subset of a population. One makes observations on suitable units of a random sample in order to make statements about the population and to estimate the error associated with such statements. A common misconception regarding surveys and associated statistical theory, is that 'population' (or population size) is a factor in margin of error. This is not true. Population does not appear in the statistical formulation for margin of error.

6. In the tables attached to this report, the black population sample size is reported as 925 rather than 900. The difference is attributable to the weighting of the black sample to achieve desired population distributions.

Tables

Table 1

How would you rate your local public schools–would you say they are excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	Black Population				General Population			
	Excellent/ Good	Fair/ Poor	D/K		Excellent/ Good	Fair/ Poor	D/K	
	%	%	%	(N)	%	%	%	(N)
Total	39	58	2	925	59	38	3	850
White	-	-	-	-	60	37	3	683
Men	38	59	3	415	57	41	3	399
Women	41	58	2	510	62	35	4	451
18-25	35	65	-	123	61	39	1	101
26-35	43	55	1	149	52	43	6	139
36-50	41	57	1	248	55	43	2	235
51-64	39	56	5	234	64	34	3	220
65+	37	61	1	140	63	32	5	129
Northeast	32	66	3	160	63	34	4	209
Midwest	31	68	2	200	66	32	3	203
South	43	56	2	480	53	45	3	267
West	60	33	7	85	57	39	5	171
Liberal	37	61	2	304	56	37	7	241
Moderate	45	53	1	312	58	40	2	246
Secular Conservative	38	51	12	57	63	34	3	108
Christian Conservative	36	64	1	211	62	36	2	222
Less than HS	49	50	2	115	61	39	-	56
HS Graduate	37	62	1	324	57	38	4	237
Some College/Tech	39	57	5	236	61	36	3	209
College Degree+	40	58	2	223	59	38	3	334
Less than $15,000	48	48	4	107	52	46	2	68
$15-$35,000	40	59	1	223	50	48	1	149
$35-$60,000	37	60	3	265	56	41	4	216
$60-$90,000	33	67	-	122	66	30	4	162
More than $90,000	52	44	4	54	64	32	4	116
Children	42	58	1	440	61	37	2	317
No Children	38	58	4	462	58	38	4	519

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 2

Over the past five years, do you think that the schools in your community have gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?

	Black Population					General Population				
	Better	Same	Worse	D/K		Better	Same	Worse	D/K	
	%	%	%	%	(N)	%	%	%	%	(N)
Total	28	33	34	6	925	29	39	23	9	850
White	-	-	-	-	-	27	40	24	9	683
Men	26	36	32	6	415	30	39	24	8	399
Women	29	31	35	5	510	28	40	22	10	451
18-25	26	33	38	3	123	31	36	25	9	101
26-35	24	35	37	4	149	27	32	28	13	139
36-50	29	29	39	3	248	31	41	23	5	235
51-64	30	35	27	7	234	30	41	21	8	220
65+	25	38	27	10	140	24	43	21	12	129
Northeast	23	37	35	6	160	27	42	22	10	209
Midwest	27	33	38	3	200	32	40	22	6	203
South	31	32	31	6	480	33	35	23	9	267
West	22	32	38	8	85	23	43	25	9	171
Liberal	28	33	34	5	304	28	37	22	13	241
Moderate	28	37	31	4	312	33	44	18	5	246
Secular Conservative	38	23	28	12	57	27	45	20	7	108
Christian Conservative	25	31	40	5	211	29	36	28	7	222
Less than HS	37	31	23	10	115	25	43	20	13	56
HS Graduate	27	35	33	4	324	28	39	23	10	237
Some College/Tech	24	38	32	7	236	31	37	24	8	209
College Degree+	27	26	42	5	223	29	40	23	8	334
Less than $15,000	31	31	29	8	107	20	55	17	8	68
$15-$35,000	31	39	26	4	223	29	36	28	8	149
$35-$60,000	24	32	37	7	265	27	39	27	7	216
$60-$90,000	26	27	45	3	122	32	40	19	9	162
More than $90,000	33	28	35	4	54	35	36	22	8	116
Children	29	33	36	3	440	31	40	23	5	317
No Children	27	34	31	9	462	27	39	23	11	519

Table 3

Have there been any violent incidents at any of the schools near where you live during the past year?

	Black Population				General Population			
	Yes	No	D/K		Yes	No	D/K	
	%	%	%	(N)	%	%	%	(N)
Total	31	67	2	925	28	70	3	850
White	-	-	-	-	27	70	3	683
Men	31	67	2	415	25	71	4	399
Women	31	67	2	510	30	68	2	415
18-25	51	48	2	123	43	56	1	101
26-35	28	71	1	149	27	71	2	139
36-50	29	69	2	248	27	69	4	235
51-64	32	67	2	234	25	72	3	220
65+	24	73	4	140	26	72	2	129
Northeast	26	71	4	160	27	67	6	209
Midwest	32	65	4	200	25	73	2	203
South	33	66	2	480	30	69	2	267
West	30	70	-	85	28	70	2	171
Liberal	34	63	3	304	30	67	3	241
Moderate	30	68	2	312	27	69	5	246
Secular Conservative	30	69	2	57	23	77	-	108
Christian Conservative	29	69	2	211	28	70	2	222
Less than HS	30	70	1	115	36	64	-	56
HS Graduate	33	66	2	324	30	65	4	237
Some College/Tech	29	68	3	236	27	72	1	209
College Degree+	33	65	2	223	26	71	3	334
Less than $15,000	30	66	4	107	26	71	3	68
$15-$35,000	24	75	1	223	32	64	4	149
$35-$60,000	34	65	2	265	28	69	3	216
$60-$90,000	43	53	3	122	24	76	-	162
More than $90,000	33	65	2	54	27	68	5	116
Children	32	66	2	440	29	69	2	317
No Children	31	67	2	462	27	70	4	519

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 4

Do you think that the government is spending too much, too little, or just the right amount of money on education?

	Black Population					General Population				
	Too Much	Just Right	Too Little	D/K		Too Much	Just Right	Too Little	D/K	
	%	%	%	%	(N)	%	%	%	%	(N)
Total	4	10	82	3	925	10	17	69	4	850
White	-	-	-	-	-	11	17	68	4	683
Men	5	13	79	3	415	14	20	63	4	399
Women	3	8	85	4	510	7	15	74	4	451
18-25	7	13	79	1	123	8	11	79	2	101
26-35	3	7	90	-	149	2	12	84	2	139
36-50	5	6	89	1	248	10	17	71	1	235
51-64	3	11	83	3	234	10	22	64	4	220
65+	4	16	71	9	140	19	19	54	8	129
Northeast	3	6	89	1	160	10	17	70	3	209
Midwest	2	11	84	4	200	11	17	69	3	203
South	4	14	79	3	480	9	19	67	5	267
West	12	-	82	7	85	12	15	68	5	171
Liberal	3	9	86	2	304	6	8	85	1	241
Moderate	5	11	80	4	312	5	21	70	5	246
Secular Conservative	2	12	83	4	57	19	23	54	4	108
Christian Conservative	4	11	83	3	211	17	22	54	7	222
Less than HS	8	17	69	6	115	13	11	70	7	56
HS Graduate	4	11	82	2	324	12	17	68	4	237
Some College/Tech	3	7	88	2	236	10	18	68	4	209
College Degree+	2	8	87	3	223	9	19	70	2	334
Less than $15,000	-	16	80	5	107	9	17	66	8	68
$15-$35,000	2	12	84	2	223	10	14	73	3	149
$35-$60,000	6	9	84	1	265	9	15	73	3	216
$60-$90,000	3	12	84	2	122	13	22	63	2	162
More than $90,000	14	4	83	-	54	12	14	72	2	116
Children	4	8	87	1	440	9	16	74	2	317
No Children	4	12	79	4	462	11	19	66	4	519

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 5

Would you support a voucher system where parents would get money from the government to send their children to the public, private, or parochial school of their choice?

	Black Population				General Population			
	Yes	No	D/K		Yes	No	D/K	
	%	%	%	(N)	%	%	%	(N)
Total	60	33	7	925	53	40	7	850
White	-	-	-	-	52	41	7	683
Men	58	35	7	415	57	38	6	399
Women	61	32	8	510	50	42	8	451
18-25	71	24	5	123	65	29	6	101
26-35	76	20	4	149	57	36	7	139
36-50	67	26	7	248	62	35	4	235
51-64	49	44	7	234	46	47	7	220
65+	42	49	9	140	38	51	11	129
Northeast	61	31	8	160	55	39	6	209
Midwest	65	29	7	200	52	42	6	203
South	57	37	6	480	53	39	8	267
West	58	28	13	85	52	40	8	171
Liberal	56	38	7	304	47	46	8	241
Moderate	58	31	11	312	52	44	4	246
Secular Conservative	61	36	4	57	60	32	7	108
Christian Conservative	68	28	3	211	59	34	8	222
Less than HS	64	26	10	115	73	14	13	56
HS Graduate	64	30	7	324	54	38	8	237
Some College/Tech	56	36	8	236	55	37	8	209
College Degree+	58	39	3	223	49	47	4	334
Less than $15,000	72	20	8	107	59	32	9	68
$15-$35,000	59	32	9	223	55	38	7	149
$35-$60,000	62	34	4	265	54	42	5	216
$60-$90,000	58	38	3	122	53	42	6	162
More than $90,000	71	28	2	54	55	41	4	116
Children	71	22	7	440	63	31	6	317
No Children	50	44	6	462	47	45	7	519

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 6

Which of the following statements is closer to your views: Statewide standards or tests for high school graduation are a good thing and will ensure that students leave school with the skills they need to compete in the workforce or college—or—Statewide standards or tests are unfair because they prevent or make it more difficult for minority students to receive a high school diploma.

	Black Population				General Population			
	Pro-Tests	Tests Unfair	D/K		Pro-Tests	Tests Unfair	D/K	
	%	%	%	(N)	%	%	%	(N)
Total	55	37	8	925	69	20	12	850
White	-	-	-	-	71	17	12	683
Men	57	35	8	415	72	18	10	399
Women	54	38	8	510	65	22	13	451
18-25	52	46	2	123	63	30	7	101
26-35	56	33	11	149	73	19	7	139
36-50	57	37	7	248	66	23	11	235
51-64	57	36	7	234	73	17	10	220
65+	51	36	12	140	67	14	19	129
Northeast	65	29	6	160	70	18	12	209
Midwest	51	41	9	200	63	23	14	203
South	54	38	9	480	73	17	10	267
West	58	35	7	85	66	23	11	171
Liberal	58	36	7	304	63	30	8	241
Moderate	55	38	7	312	67	17	17	246
Secular Conservative	59	33	8	57	76	17	7	108
Christian Conservative	54	37	9	211	73	15	12	222
Less than HS	44	47	10	115	61	32	7	56
HS Graduate	57	38	6	324	68	18	14	237
Some College/Tech	54	35	11	236	73	18	10	209
College Degree+	60	33	7	223	68	21	11	334
Less than $15,000	57	39	5	107	63	23	14	68
$15-$35,000	53	39	8	223	61	25	14	149
$35-$60,000	53	37	10	265	69	20	12	216
$60-$90,000	68	27	5	122	73	20	7	162
More than $90,000	76	22	2	54	78	18	4	116
Children	56	36	8	440	73	20	7	317
No Children	54	38	8	462	66	20	14	519

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
1090 Vermont Ave., N.W., Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005-4928
www.jointcenter.org

BEST COPY AVAILABLE